

# Verbal and Nonverbal Discourse of Male Characters in Animated Movies

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***ABSTRACT.** An observation on gender discourse (verbal and nonverbal communication) is the main concern of various scientific studies. Verbal communication serves to express one's own views, information and ideas in the form of sound and words. The spoken language involves face-to-face communication, while nonverbal communication (also known as silent language) is the transmission of messages through eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and spatial relationship between the sender and the receiver to convey a message. Researchers have substantiated in earlier studies that verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of men and women are quite different (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Kring & Gordon, 1998).*

*The goal of the manuscript is to observe and analyse discourse (verbal and nonverbal) of male mice characters in two animated movies (American – “**The Great Mouse Detective**” and Georgian – “**Tsuna and Tsrutsuna**”). Observation and qualitative research methods, as well as typological analysis are used during the study.*

*Consequently, two animated movies (“The Great Mouse Detective” (American) and “Tsuna and Trutsuna” (Georgian) have been selected for farther analysis where the main heroes represent mice and rats.*

*The study based on the observational research has revealed the fact that animated movie characters act in similar way male and female gender perform in various situations. Observation on movie characters implies the deep social and linguistic analysis of verbal and non-verbal discourse which is expressed in their actions and interrelations towards each other.*

***Key words:** animated movie, verbal discourse, nonverbal discourse, Tsuna and Tsrutsuna, The Great Mouse Detective*

## INTRODUCTION

'Gender analysis' offered tools for investigating the material bases of difference between women and men. Yet, gender analysis tells us very little about how gender identities and roles are experienced by individual women and men within communities. Rather, it is used to delineate distinctions between what women-in-general and men-in-

general do, in order to guide planners (Sweetman, 1997:15).

Research on gender and sex in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis started systematically in the early 1970s, probably as a result of women's liberation movements. Investigators examined two domains of language behavior in particular: speech behavior of men and women on the phonological level, and interactions (conversational styles) between women and men in discourse (Wodak, 2015:698).

The terms "gender" and "sex" are often used in similar contexts however the definition of terms is not same. The word sex means biological difference between male and female, and gender means the socio- political constructed roles of males and females given by any society (Lippa, 2005).

Therefore, an observation on gender discourse (verbal and nonverbal communication) is the main concern of various scientific studies. Verbal communication serves to express one's own views, information and ideas in the form of sound and words. The spoken language involves face-to-face communication, while nonverbal communication (also known as silent language) is the transmission of messages through eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and spatial relationship between the sender and the receiver to convey a message. Perry (1992) explains communication as the way to express opinions, emotions and feelings.

Researchers have substantiated in earlier studies that verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of men and women are quite different (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Kring & Gordon, 1998).

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY**

The goal of the manuscript is to observe and analyse discourse (verbal and nonverbal) of male mice characters in two animated movies (American – "*The Great Mouse Detective*" and Georgian – "*Tsuna and Tsrutsuna*"). Observation and qualitative research methods, as well as typological analysis are used during the study.

Two animated movies ("The Great Mouse Detective" (American) and "Tsuna and Trutsuna" (Georgian) have been selected for farther analysis where mice and rats are represented as main characters.

Since prehistoric times, "rats" and "mice" (in the broad sense) have always accompanied man. As a result, they are animals which occupy a very strong symbolism and which are strongly presented in the folkloric and artistic fields. Throughout history, these rodents are frequently confused and very often share the same cultural aspect (Garibashvili et al., 2021: 179)

#### **SYNOPSIS**

"*The Great Mouse Detective*" belongs to 1986 American animated mystery adventure film. It was produced by Walt Disney Feature Animation and released by Walt Disney Pictures.

The renowned mouse detective Basil of Baker Street is helping a small mouse child named Olivia Flaversham find her father, a toymaker, who has been kidnapped by the nefarious Prof. Ratigan and his cronies. Basil knows that whatever Ratigan is planning, it will endanger England and, indeed, all of mousedom. So Basil, his friend Dr. Dawson, and Olivia

must thwart Ratigan and his minions, including Fidget, a peg-legged bat with a broken wing; and Felicia, Ratigan's cat (<http://allreaders.com/movie-review-summary/the-great-mouse-detective-10258>).

*“Tsun and Tsrutsuna”* is directed by Akaki Khintibidze in 1961. Tsuna and Tsrutsuna are two country mice in love. An old local baron kidnaps Tsuna and puts an end to their happiness. Tsrutsuna is desperate and thinks about giving up on life, but help comes from allies who will challenge the kidnapper. Thus, Tsrutsuna is a famous cartoon character, a brave mouse that shows that nothing can stop a person when he is in love. The moral of the story is to fight for love because, when something is worth having, it’s worth fighting for (Garibashvili et al., 2021: 179).

## RESULTS

Nonverbal expression of masculinity in animated movies is extremely interesting and varied. The study material was based on two full length animated movies (American – *“The Great Mouse Detective”* and Georgian – *“Tsun and Tsrutsuna”*). These movies were produced in two separate countries having totally different culture and language system. The only concept they share is mice characters which represent an interesting gender-related phenomena from verbal and nonverbal discourse view point.

Both movies are assorted to “good” and “bad” characters. The stereotype of malicious image of rats is vivid in both cases i.e. mice represent “good characters”, while rats are regarded to be villains.

Basil of Baker Street (or Basil for Short) is the main mouse character in “The Great Mouse Detective”. Basil is a tall, slender, anthropomorphic mouse with a thin rectangular frame and contrasting soft facial features. He has light brown fur, a sand-like color on the muzzle, and obviously his underbelly, mauve inner ears, a maroon nose, and black eyes. Unlike real-life mice, he has no whiskers, fur-covered hands, fur-covered hands, and feet, but retains the buck teeth ([https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Basil\\_of\\_Baker\\_Street](https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Basil_of_Baker_Street))



Basil is a bold private consulting detective and is occupied with catching criminals, solving crimes and supporting others. He is not only physically capable but also very skillful in science, history and disguise. Masculine traits are vividly shown in his strong character. He is characterized as a brilliant, plucky mouse refusing to back down or end his pursuit against Prof. Ratigan, who makes him tenacious.

At the same time Basil expresses gentility especially with female characters. His politeness is vivid while talking with Olivia who asks him for assistance: *“Young lady, this is*

*a most inopportune time*". Though in certain situations he might be quite brusque in speech with femininity (E.g. *Young lady, you are most definitely not accompanying us. And that is final..... Not a word out of you. Is that clear?*), especially when he feels serious danger ahead. In most situations Basil is very firm and harsh keeping the colloquial style in speech: *"Stop, you friend!.....Ah, ya! Look out!"*. Basil resembles to a male person who never suffers disappointment and tries to encourage close people around: *"There's always a chance, Doctor.....as long as one can think!"*

Beside positive traits, Basil is high-tempered and emotional who can also be prickly and self-centered. His emotional character is often vivid in the verbal discourse when it regards to Prof. Ratigan. In such cases he is totally brutal not hesitating to expose his furious anger towards his enemy. E.g. *"Nooooooooooooo! Drat!.....Another dead end!.....he was within my grasp."* Basil dislikes Ratigan so much that he calls him *"the horror of his every waking moment"* and a *"sewer rat"*. Though Basil is often rude, he has acknowledged that Ratigan is smart enough in his actions and he calls the enemy *"a genius"* who is *"twisted for evil"*. Basil becomes very moody if things do not go his way or if the situation looks dire, though on the other hand he is quite affectionate and empathetic in certain situation.

The other main character of the movie is Dr. David Q. Dawson – a surgeon who returns home to London, England after military service in Afghanistan. One can find an interesting description of Dawson's look by Basil: *"You've sewn your torn cuff together with the Lembert stitch, which of course, only a surgeon uses. And the thread is a unique form of catgut distinguished by its... ..peculiar pungency..."*

Besides his noble profession (surgery), Dawson is a very kind mouse and is ready to become Basil's partner on his hunt to find Mr. Flaversham from the diabolical Professor Ratigan.



From his personal traits one can easily find that Dr. Dawson is fond of safety and being polite and he is against rudeness. He resembles to a generous person who is ready to give a hand to any person he meets in distress. In this case he takes decision to assist little Olivia in finding detective Basil though he doesn't know Basil himself: *"There, there, there. Now, now, now. Well, I don't know any Basil..... But I do remember where Baer Street is. Now, come with me. We'll find this Basil chap together."* At the same time he is an extremely polite person using expressive language especially with female characters: *"Good evening, Madam. Is this the residence of Basil of Baker Street?"*

The main antagonist in the movie is professor Ratigan who is also named after Sewer

rat though he terribly dislikes it. He is the archenemy of Basil of Baker Street.

Ratigan's ferocious nature camouflaged in noblemanly look is easily observable in the movie. He is a towering rat with grey fur dressed in a black tuxedo suit complete with a long black cape with a red underside. His face is shaven and has yellow eyes with lavender circles around them, above them are thick eyebrows. Although Ratigan lavishes himself as a mouse, he has rat-like characteristics, such as sharp fangs and fingers, a large nose, a long, pink tail. On his head, he wears a black top hat with grey band, which covers his black combed hair. His suit includes a high white collar and a dark gray vest with buttons on it with a pink-and-purple striped cravat. On his hands are white gloves and cuffs with golden cufflinks. He is always seen carrying a gold cane (<https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Ratigan>).



Ratigan's character can be compared with a self-centered man, who detests being called a rat, preferring to be called a "big mouse" and a "supreme ruler of all mousedom".

His desire is to earn himself riches and to rule over his fellow men in the place of Queen Mousetoria. Unlike most evildoers, he acknowledges his crimes as being immoral and takes pride in his wicked acts, which he acknowledges as being evil, making him a truly sadistic and heartless being. A number of epithets and metaphors such as "*twisted for evil.... The Napoleon of Crime*" are used in the text for describing his foul deeds. He even says that he loves being nasty and that he is about to pull off a crime that will leave an infamous legacy (<https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Ratigan>). Thus, he doesn't hide his vile mood announcing that "he loves it when he is nasty". While Basil declares Ratigan to be a "*genius*" despite his malicious deeds, Ratigan doesn't avoid humiliation calling Basil "*miserable second-rate detective*". His antipathy towards Basil is shown on every step. His speech is full of devices (epithets, hyperbole) with negative expressions. E.g. "*For years, that insufferable pipsqueak has interfered with my plans. I haven't had a moment's peace of mind.*"

Ratigan's verbal discourse is rich with interesting stylistic devices (epithets, hyperbole, parallel constructions, repetition...) describing abominable behavior towards the others. E.g. "*My friends, we are about to embark on the most odious, the most evil, the most diabolical scheme of my illustrious career. A crime to top all crimes.... A crime that will live in infamy!*" He resembles to an egoist man who is admired to be worshiped by others: "*All will bow before me!*"

As we have already mentioned above, all the movie characters in "Tsun and Tsrutsuna" (Georgian animated movie) are mice. Though the plot is different from the American movie, the similarity between them is based on the polarity of main mice

characters (good and evil) and a bitter struggle among them. The most interesting coincidence between these movies is the phenomena of rats representing evil characters. The fact can be explained with the only argument that rats are one of the most disgusting creatures and no wonder why they are associated with evil characters in movies.

The movie starts with a popular Georgian traditional sport game “Lelo” (similar to rugby) played among Georgian men which is a clear representation of physical strength, courage and trickery at the same time. In this game the winner is one of the main characters Trutsuna who is a courageous mouse who successfully achieves triumph. From the scene the movie director tries to outline the main features of Tsrutuna who is bold, courageous and crafty. This is a visual narration of events for expressing nonverbal discourse of the character.

Tsrutuna is a young character which is in love with Tsuna (mouse female character) and acts like an infatuatedly amorous man. A love song performed by amorous twosomes is worth mentioning because the song text describes Georgian traditions of marriage proposal according to which a young girl cannot get married until a bridegroom visits a girl’s family and ask her father for her hand. In this movie Tsuna (bride) orders her sweetheart Tsrutuna to take a wedding permission from her grandfather (because she is orphan).

„გოგო ჩემი უნდა გახდე  
შეგიკერავ ფაცაცებსა“  
„ბიჭო მე რას მეკითხები  
წადი ჰკითხე პაპაჩემსა“  
*papachemsa*”]

[“*gogo chemi unda gakhde  
shegikerav pachachebsa*”  
“*bitcho me ras mekitkhebi  
tsadi hkitkhe*”

“Lady you must be mine  
I’ll make shoes for you, fine”  
“Hey, Chap! Why to beg me?  
Go to grandpa and ask my hand to him”

Trutsuna’s life dramatically changes when the master of the village (male rat character) kidnaps his fiancée and he feels disappointed himself. Another male character who symbolizes a real friendship is Pitskhela (Tsrutuna’s friend) who is ready to help him in returning the fiancée by encouraging him with the following words: “წრუწუნ, ხვალ თუ შენი პატარძალი არ ჩაგაბარო, ეს ბიჭი მოკვდეს!” [tsrutun, khval tu sheni patardzali ar chagabaro, es bitchi mokvdes!] (I promise I will liberate your fiancée).

While being in distress, Tsrutuna subconsciously whispers „*ყოფნა-არყოფნა საკითავი აი ეს არის!* [kopna-ar kopna sakitkhavi ai e saris!] – (To be or not to be that is the question - a famous soliloquy from the “Hamlet” by Shakespeare) and the image of his friend Pitskhela responds from the mirror: *-ყოფნა წრუწუნ ჯან! ყოფნა!* [kopna trsutun jan! kopna] – (To be Tsrutun jan). It’s worth accenting the word “*Jan*” which is an Armenian word expressing kind attitude to the interlocutor. The word is practically not translated in English but theoretically it means “dear” or “sweetheart”. But at the same time, he is very strict in order to protect his friend from self-destruction: *ეჰ, ტუტუც, რას შვრები, რას, ნიახური ხომ არა ხარ, ამ ქვეყანაზე მეორედ მოხვიდე?* (eh, tututs, ras shvrebi, ras,

niakhuri khom ara khar, am qvekanaze meored mokhvide? – (Hey, You, an Idiot! What are you doing? Are you celery to come to the world for the second time?)

Pitskhela symbolizes the image of a combative, hardworking, brave urban craftsman. He has a riotous soul and is ready to assist Trutsuna in despair with the help of his friends – urban craftsmen. The toasts uttered by Pitskhela and his city friends (urban craftsmen) draw our attention. They try to support and encourage Tsrutsuna. In the toasts one can easily recognize that the friends take compassion upon the desperate man:

- - *ეს იმ კაცს გაუმარჯოს, რომელიც წყალში დგას და ცეცხლი უკიდია.* [es im kats gaumarjos, romelits tskalshi dgas da tsetskhli ukidia] - Here is to a young man standing in the water but still on fire.
- - *ეს იმ მთვარეს გაუმარჯოს, ძმის საშველად წასულ ძმას რომ გზას გაუნათებს.* [es im mtvares gaumarjos, dzmis sashvelad tsasul dzmas rom gzas gaunatebs] - Here is to the moon that will light the way to the friend searching for his companion.
- - *ეს იმ მტრედს გაუმარჯოს, რომელიც რომა გალიაში ზის, იტანჯება და თავის გულის ტოლს ელოდება.* [es im mtreds gaumarjos, romelic roma galiashi zis, itanjeba da tavis gulis tols elodeba] – (Here’s to the dove sitting in the a cage, suffering and waiting for his sweet heart)

As we have mentioned above among the mice characters we meet villain rats – local baron with gray mustache and his two younger insincere and cunning servants. Like Ratigan from “The Great Mouse Detective” the cruel baron wishes to be a supreme ruler. While seeing Tsrutsuna’s fiancée, he tries to abduct her with the help of his servants. E.g. “*ე გოგო ჩემთვის მინდა!*” [*e gogo tchemtvis minda*] (I want this lady to be mine!); “*ახლავე აქ მომგვარეთ, თორემ მე ვიცი, თქვენი!*” [*akhlave ak momgvaret, torema me vitsi, tkveni*] (Bring her immediately to me, otherwise I will punish you!)

One can have similar emotional reaction while seeing two cunning servants whose speech and actions cause immediate negative impression. They often address their baron with the following phrase *შენი ჭირიძე!* [*sheni tchirime*] which literally means “**Your grief to me**” and idiomatically corresponds “**my dear**”.

## CONCLUSION

The study based on the observational research has revealed the fact that animated movie characters act in similar way male and female gender perform in various situations. Observation on movie characters implies the deep social and linguistic analysis of verbal and non-verbal discourse which is expressed in their actions and interrelations towards each other.

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## მამრობითი სქესის ვერბალური და არავერბალური დისკურსი ანიმაციურ ფილმებში

ლარიბაშვილი მანანა

იაკობ გოგებაშვილის სახელობის თელავის  
სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი

ლაზვიაშვილი შორენა

იაკობ გოგებაშვილის სახელობის თელავის  
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### აბსტრაქტი

გენდერულ დისკურსზე (ვერბალური და არავერბალური კომუნიკაცია) დაკვირვება სხვადასხვა სამეცნიერო კვლევის მთავარი საზრუნავია. ვერბალური კომუნიკაცია ემსახურება საკუთარი შეხედულებების, ინფორმაციისა და იდეების გამოხატვას ბგერისა და სიტყვების სახით. სალაპარაკო ენა მოიცავს პირისპირ კომუნიკაციას, ხოლო არავერბალური კომუნიკაცია (ასევე ცნობილია, როგორც ჩუმი ენა) არის შეტყობინებების გადაცემა თვალის კონტაქტის, სახის გამონათქვამების, ჟესტებისა და სივრცითი ურთიერთობის გამომგზავნისა და მიმღებს შორის შეტყობინების გადასაცემად. ბოლოდროინდელი კვლევების საფუძველზე დასტურდება, რომ ქალისა და მამაკაცის ვერბალური და არავერბალური კომუნიკაციის ნიმუშები საკმაოდ განსხვავებულია (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Kring & Gordon, 1998).

ნაშრომის მიზანია დადგინდეს მამრობითი სქესის ანიმაციური გმირების მეტყველება (ვერბალური და არავერბალური) ორი ანიმაციური ფილმის საფუძველზე (ამერიკული ანიმაციური ფილმი – “დიდი დეტექტივი თაგვი” და ქართული ანიმაციური ფილმი – “წუნა და წრუწუნა”). კვლევის დროს გამოყენებულია დაკვირვებისა და თვისებრივი კვლევის მეთოდები, ასევე ტიპოლოგიური ანალიზი.

შესაბამისად, კვლევისთვის შერჩეულია ორი ანიმაციური ფილმი (ამერიკული ანიმაციური ფილმი – “დიდი დეტექტივი თაგვი” და ქართული ანიმაციური ფილმი – “წუნა და წრუწუნა”), სადაც მთავარ მოქმედ გმირებად გვევლინებიან თაგვები და ვირთხები.

დაკვირვებაზე დაფუძნებულმა კვლევამ გამოავლინა ის ფაქტი, რომ ანიმაციური ფილმების გმირები მოქმედებენ ისევე, როგორც მამრობითი და მდედრობითი სქესის წარმომადგენლები სხვადასხვა სიტუაციებში. ფილმის გმირებზე დაკვირვება გულისხმობს ვერბალური და არავერბალური დისკურსის ღრმა სოციალურ და ენობრივ ანალიზს, რაც გამოიხატება მათ ქმედებებში და ურთიერთდამოკიდებულებაში.

*საკვანძო სიტყვები: ანიმაციური ფილმი, ვერბალური დისკურსი, არავერბალური დისკურსი, წუნა და წრუწუნა, დიდი დეტექტივი თავი*